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Baylies
Eulogy
on the
Hon. Benjamin Russell
Boston, 1845.





Class F 69
Book R 96

EULOGY

ON THE

HON. BENJAMIN RUSSELL,

DELIVERED BEFORE

Sal

THE GRAND LODGE

OF

FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS

OF

THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS,

MARCH 10, 1845.

BY BROTHER FRANCIS BAYLIES.

BOSTON:

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE FREEMASONS' MAGAZINE.

1845.

EULOGY

ON THE

HON. BENJAMIN RUSSELL, 231

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE GRAND LODGE

OF

FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS

OF

THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS,

THE LIBRARY
MARCH 10, 1845.

OF CONGRESS

BY BROTHER FRANCIS BAYLIES.

BOSTON:

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE FREEMASONS' MAGAZINE.

1845.



IN GRAND LODGE,
Boston, March 12, 1845. }

Resolved, That the Grand Lodge listened with uncommon pleasure to the eloquent, instructive and patriotic Eulogy, on their late Brother Benjamin Russell, delivered on the evening of the 10th inst., by Hon. Br. Francis Baylies. And believing that it is too valuable to be lost, that it is wanted by the friends of the deceased, and by the friends of the country,

Resolved, That a committee be appointed to present the thanks of the Grand Lodge to Brother Baylies for the address, and to request a copy of it for publication.

The following Brethren were appointed a Committee for the purpose contemplated in the last of the above resolutions, viz: R. W. John Soley, E. M. P. Wells, James A. Dickson, Edward A. Raymond and John J. Loring.

Copy of record,

Attest,

CHARLES W. MOORE, *R. G. Secretary.*

Boston, March 13, 1845.

SIR:—In pursuance of the foregoing resolutions, the subscribers respectfully request a copy of the EULOGY for the purpose therein expressed, and beg leave to add, that a compliance with the wishes of the Grand Lodge will afford them great personal gratification. Respectfully and fraternally yours,

JOHN SOLEY,
E. M. P. WELLS,
JAMES A. DICKSON,
EDWARD A. RAYMOND,
JOHN J. LORING.

Hon. Francis Baylies.

Taunton, March 25, 1845.

BROTHERS:—The requests of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts have with me the authority of a law. I submit the EULOGY with all its imperfections, to your discretion,—willing that it should be published if you think it worthy of publication. If you should deem it inexpedient, believe me that your determination will inflict no wound on my vanity, and that I shall still have full confidence in your discretion and good sense.

Yours,

FRANCIS BAYLIES.

Brs. John Soley, E. M. P. Wells, James A. Dickson,
Edward A. Raymond, John J. Loring.

210 April 2

E U L O G Y .

WE are assembled, my Brothers, to commemorate the life and the death of our departed Brother, BENJAMIN RUSSELL. His long journey through this world is ended, and he has reached that quiet place where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. The Masonic rites have been duly performed at the grave, and the cassia has been thrown on the coffin. The remembrance of his virtues remains; and there is a consolation even in grief.

The characters of conspicuous men are presented in many lights, and few there are which afford so many varieties as Benjamin Russell's; for he is to be considered as a Freemason, a Revolutionary Soldier, a Printer, the Editor of a newspaper, having a wide circulation and a prodigious influence,—an active Politician, a Patriot, a Legislator, and he is also to be considered in his social, moral and civic relations. The range is so wide that my allusions to him in each of these characters, must from necessity be brief.

He was the son of John Russell, and the nephew of Joseph Russell, so long the Town Treasurer of Boston, and he was born in Boston, in September, 1761.

Through the aid of a learned and indefatigable member of a profession which in these days of utility is disregarded and sometimes ridiculed,* but in whose studies a Gibbon and a Walter Scott have taken delight, and who are the very Freemasons of literature, for they never refuse to help each other, I have received some account of the American ancestors of Benjamin Russell, who, in the paternal line, ascend nearly to the settlement of Boston, and through four of the five generations immediately preceding him, were all Bostonians. His father, grandfather and great-grandfather were born, lived and died in Boston, and two of them belonged to that class of men for whom some of the fairest pages in American history are reserved—the mechanics of Boston. His English ancestor, John Russell, who settled at Woburn, and who is called in the early records, the Anabaptist, was admitted a freeman, May 3, 1635, and Benjamin Russell was descended from a son of that ancestor, who came with him young from England, and was afterwards known as the Rev. John Russell, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Boston, and who acquired notoriety by his piety and his persecutions. Maternally, Major Russell was descended from Ezekiel Cheever, who for nearly sixty years, was the principal Latin schoolmaster in New England, and who instructed more eminent persons in the elements of learning, perhaps, than any one schoolmaster in North America. He was related, collaterally, to one who has done the most for American history and antiquities,—a delightful writer and the founder of

*Rev. Dr. Jenks.

the Historical Society. I mean the late Dr. Jeremy Belknap. I mention these circumstances, not so much for their intrinsic importance, (although they are not unimportant,) but to show how thoroughly Benjamin Russell was identified with this city.—Boston to him was a sacred city, as much as Jerusalem to a Jew, Athens to an Athenian, and Paris to a Frenchman.

From the year 1765, to the termination of Washington's administration in 1797, the mechanics of Boston, in all public affairs, exercised a positive and most efficient influence, and in one sense may be considered the pioneers of the American Revolution.

There has been a general acquiescence in an historical error, which would assign the first step in the Revolution to the resolutions offered by Patrick Henry, after the imposition of the Stamp Act, in the House of Burgesses of Virginia, on the 28th day of May, 1765. Four of these resolutions were in general terms, and might have been assented to by Whig or Tory. The fifth denied the supremacy of the British Parliament and their right to tax the people of the American Colonies without their consent. That resolution was carried by one vote. Had the matter rested there, Virginia would have been justly entitled to the credit of having been the first in the revolutionary movement; but on the next day, (May 29th,) that resolution was rescinded. Virginia was not ready to array herself against the imposing power of the British Empire.

On the 6th day of June, 1765, the subject of the Stamp Act was taken up in the House of Representatives of Massachusetts, and on the 8th, it was voted

unanimously, that a Circular Letter, signed by their Speaker, should be addressed to the several Colonial Assemblies, inviting them to send delegates to a General Congress of the Colonies, to be holden at New York. This was a practical measure. It was not confined to declarations and professions. It proposed a union and combination of the colonies for the purpose of obtaining a redress of grievances. The Congress did assemble, and had not the Stamp Act been repealed, their proceedings would not have been huddled into a corner of our national history.

When the General Court of Massachusetts, after voting the Circular, adjourned, the Mechanics, as it is said, led by Paul Revere and Adam Colson, and encouraged by Colonel Dawes, took the lead in opposing the Stamp Act. Many excesses were committed—some justifiable and some inexcusable. Mobs paraded the streets and, in imitation of the London Mobs, they bore about the significant emblems of a boot and a petticoat. A liberty tree was consecrated. Stamp officers were compelled to resign their offices. Much property and some buildings were destroyed. The Stamp Act was repealed. Quiet was restored, but new grievance aroused a new spirit of resistance, full as determined, but more restrained. The paper war,—the war of resolutions, addresses, petitions, remonstrances, speeches and invectives, then commenced. The mechanics were organized,—the North End Caucus,—the Green Dragon Tavern,—the Massacre,—the destruction of the Tea,—the Port Bill, and the annihilation of the Charter, will not be forgotten by the people of Massachusetts.

On the 19th day of April, 1775, this mode of warfare was terminated, and on that day Benjamin Russell, a boy of thirteen and the son of a mechanic, came upon the public stage as an actor in a humble capacity in the great affairs of the times. He was then a school boy under the instruction of the celebrated Master Carter.

From a statement written by himself, I have extracted some particulars of that eventful day. He says, that in the morning, soon after the opening of the Town School, (which was kept in Scollay's buildings,) martial music was heard, and *the Regulars* were seen in movement. They were soon paraded in Long Acre, which is now Tremont street, and the line extended from the head of the Mall to the head of Queen street, now Court street, facing which was the school house. Lord Percy, mounted on a white charger, was busy in arranging the column. Lord Percy! What recollections come thronging over the mind at that name! Charlemagne—the Crusades—the great feudal House of Northumberland—Hotspur—and here—here—here in Long Acre—(Tremont street) was his descendant—his representative—the owner of his name—his state—his blazon and his castles—arranging his soldiers for a battle with the Yankees! Well has a native poet said—

“I wandered through the lofty halls
Trode by the Percy's of old fame,
And traced upon the chapel walls
Each high, heroic name,
From him who once his standard set
Where now, o'er mosque and minaret,
Glitter the Sultan's crescent moons;
To him who, when a younger son,
Fought for King George, at Lexington,
A Major of Dragoons!”

When these movements were seen, Master Carter sent out one of the boys for information. It came full soon. The British had fallen on the Americans at Lexington, killed several, and had sent for a reinforcement. Master Carter then said—"Boys, war has begun—the school is broken up." This annunciation was received with three cheers, and the boys, having gained their own freedom, sallied forth to see whether the men would gain their's. They followed in the rear of the column when the British took up their line of march, and at Roxbury, through the courtesy of the Provost Marshal, (an unwonted quality in such characters,) they were permitted to pass the fortifications, and followed as far as the Colleges in Cambridge. The boys being wearied, rested on the Common, and Lord Percy's column proceeded through West Cambridge to Lexington. The boys remained in play on the common until near sunset, and as the firing then appeared to be near, they ascended a rising ground and saw the British army, followed by the Americans, in full retreat. They heard the whistling of the bullets, but like Charles XII., knew not what it meant, until they were informed by Farmer Hastings, of Cambridge, that they were in danger. They descended, regained the Cambridge road, and began to think of eating, for since breakfasting they had taken no food. On an examination, they found their pockets nearly as empty as their stomachs, but through the kindness of Mr. Hastings, they obtained a supper, and lay down to their rest in one of the colleges, and amidst the din of arms they slept the sleep which heaven in its mercy sends to the weary and the young. They

could not return home, for Boston was now in a state of close siege; and thus were these young boys separated from their families and exposed to all the dangers of the war, and even found themselves for a short period *between* two hostile armies, actually engaged in battle. The patriots of the revolution had hearts; they were hearts of steel, but they were also hearts of flesh, and they would not permit these boys to suffer. They gave them quarters in the Colleges, which had been converted into barracks, and furnished them with regular rations. The *Commissariat* was established in the College yard, and a printing office was set up by Samuel Hall, "from the press of which," says Major Russell, "issued streams of intelligence, and those patriotic songs and tracts which so pre-eminently animated the defenders of American liberty." "In these good quarters, partaking of public and private bounty," continues the Major, "we remained some weeks,—with nothing to regret, except that owing to the closeness of the siege, we could not inform our parents of our situation."

On the morning of the 17th of June, cannon were heard in the direction of Boston and Charlestown. Something was expected, and the boys, anxious for the sight, ran down the Charlestown road and placed themselves in a spot secure from the musketry, but exposed to the cannon balls from the ships,—and it was a sight never to be forgotten.

It is not my purpose, my Brothers, to present an historical narrative of the battle of Bunker's Hill, but only to show in general terms, those incidents which could not have failed to have left an enduring and

indelible impression upon the mind of a sanguine, enterprising and enthusiastic youth.

Boston, you well know, is surrounded by picturesque hills, forming a natural amphitheatre. The country was covered with verdure ; varied with cultivation and spotted with beautiful groves. In the midst of the most dense population in North America ; in the midst of all these scenes of rural beauty and Eden-like tranquillity, a bloody conflict was approaching. The 17th of June, 1775, was one of those delightful days which sometimes gladden the severe climate of New England. The sun triumphed in the heavens ; not a cloud saddened the deep blue of the transparent sky ; not a breath of air stirred the leaves of the trees or ruffled the smooth and lovely waters which surround this city. All nature was in repose. But what tempests raged in the hearts of men ! What hopes and fears—what fluctuating tides of feeling !

At twelve, the barges began to move from the head of Long Wharf over the waters, filled with soldiers, whose burnished arms gleamed bright in the sunbeams, while their rich scarlet dresses dazzled the eyes of every beholder.

Bating the sad reflection that men of the same lineage and language—subjects of the same King and readers of the same Bible, were about to slaughter each other,—the spectacle was not only animating and delightful, but grand, imposing and sublime.

In three hours, the battle had assumed the most terrific aspect. Twice repulsed, the British were still advancing. The hill was running with blood. The peals of cannon from the ships of war and from the

batteries on the land, were reverberating over the waters and through the hills. The houses in Boston and throughout the surrounding country were shaking with the concussion. On the hill tops and the house tops, thousands and thousands were viewing this trial of arms with swelling hearts and burning eyes. Shouts burst forth from the men—the women trembled and pressed their infants to their bosoms. The roar of the cannon—a town in flames—dead bodies—wounded men—blood—havoc—shouts and groans—formed an assemblage of sounds and sights terrible even in countries inured to all the dread vicissitudes of war, but fraught with double horrors in a country in which, until within a few weeks, the gleam of a hostile musket had never been seen. The graphic pen of General Burgoyne has left the picture. The stake was an empire; the actors on one side might be rebels, or they might be heroes; they might be disgraced with the halter, or honored with the monument.

It was on this eventful day, that Benjamin Russell, at the age of 13, gained a knowledge of some things never taught in a school room!

Several of the boys, he says, crossed and recrossed the neck during the battle—that same neck over which an American officer told General Putnam no one could cross and live. General Putnam, who was a great favorite with the boys, in his eccentric movements on his “long tailed Connecticut horse, often came near us,” says Major Russell, “and then we cheered him with an huzza for *Old Put*,”—a name which followed him through the whole course of his service.

After the battle, the boys returned to the Colleges. Hitherto they had been living at free quarters, but New Englanders are very apt to require a *quid pro quo*. A scheme was soon devised to make these boys useful. They had been well taught; they were good readers, good writers, and had some knowledge of arithmetic.

They were attached to some of the companies as clerks. "It fell to my lot," says Major Russell, "to become the clerk of the company of Connecticut troops commanded by Captain Putnam, a nephew or son of the General. We were stationed with other troops on Prospect Hill, where the General was in command. I did duty as clerk until the ensuing August. One day I was returning from the Commissaries' depot, with the weekly provisions of the company, having four men with me, and I met my father and uncle, who had just escaped from Boston. My father had not seen or heard of me since the 19th of April. He was so rejoiced to see me, that he was about to shake me for not writing to him. One of the soldiers took fire—'Don't shake that boy, Sir,' said he, 'he is our clerk.'" An explanation took place; the father and son repaired to General Putnam's tent. At the intercession of his father, General Putnam released him, and gave him an honorable discharge from his first service as a Revolutionary soldier. On the next day, his father took him to Worcester and bound him an apprentice to Isaiah Thomas, the celebrated printer, bookseller, editor and publisher.⁽¹⁾

Master Carter's school had been broken up. His

*See Note 1.

career in arms had been arrested by his father, and Major Russell now entered a school in which a mind like his could not fail to profit. He was in that school where the highest principles of liberty were taught,—the printing office of Isaiah Thomas, in Worcester.

Among his fellow-apprentices, was the late Timothy Bigelow; but he abandoned the trade of printing, and as a lawyer and statesman rose to great eminence. Between him and Major Russell the most sincere and cordial and uninterrupted friendship prevailed through life.

Major Russell's father died in November, 1778, leaving him at the age of 16, the eldest of his family, and with no provision for his or their support. He continued in the office of Mr Thomas until sometime in 1780, when by the consent of his friends, he enlisted in the Continental army as a private soldier; and on the 17th of July 1780, at the age of 17, he marched from Worcester to share the unparalleled deprivations of that glorious copartnership in suffering and in glory, of those hardy men who sometimes found a snow bank not only the softest, but the warmest bed. The life of a private soldier has little to interest; they share the hardships and dangers of war, but seldom its fame, and the stern necessities of military duty must sometimes wring a heart of humanity. I have heard Major Russell say, that he was one of the guard of Major Andre on the day of his execution. He did his duty to the last, and when the army disbanded, retired, at the age of 21, with an honorable discharge, and with a pocket full of paper promises which were scarcely available for

a breakfast; but he was not given to despair. *He resumed his trade*; and on the 24th day of March, 1784, established the Columbian Centinel, in Boston.

It is said that while in the service, Major Russell once saw by accident a Lodge of Freemasons in session in a Tent. He recognised the Sergeant Major of one of the regiments on an elevated seat, covered. He also recognised Washington sitting, uncovered, amongst the Brethren. The boy soldier, accustomed to reverence the Commander in Chief as the greatest of human beings, could not understand how he could be less than the greatest, or how one of the least could be more honored than the greatest. On inquiry, he ascertained the practical equality of the Brotherhood. Charmed with the idea, soon after his return to Boston, he was initiated and became a Freemason.

When the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts was reconstituted in 1792, he with John Cutler, John Lowell, Josiah Bartlett, Mungo Mackay and Samuel Parkman, were amongst the first Grand Officers.⁽²⁾ He went through the several gradations of office in the Grand Lodge, until in December, 1813, he attained the highest place, being elected Grand Master.

It is not my purpose, my Brothers, to enlarge on the principles or practices of Freemasonry; but merely to state, without going into details, the part which our departed Brother has taken in that Institution, and it is sufficient to state, that, in all that is called the business of the Lodge, he was active and efficient, avoiding neither trouble, nor labor. Serving on committees; visiting Lodges; in short, fulfilling every active duty imposed on him by the Brethren. It is

not necessary for me to tell you how well he performed his general duties as a Freemason. The benefits of his unceasing benevolence; his kindness of heart, and his unbounded generosity, have been felt by many, and I have no doubt are duly and gratefully remembered. He never held back the helping hand from a Brother in distress. His social feelings were always alive, and he never shrunk in the hour of danger, or sheltered himself from the storm when it hung over the Lodges. When the great men, of the land, exhibited their phantoms to the people,—dressed our Fraternity in blood-colored robes, and shewed the Lodges filled with corpses and dead men's bones; when we were threatened with penal laws, the loss of our social rights, and disfranchisement, his spirit rose to resist the oppression, and like the steel of Damascus, it shewed that its temper was true.

During the upheaving of the revolutionary elements in Europe, many of the children of misfortune and the victims of change, were sojourners in our land, most of whom, perhaps, were Freemasons, and amongst them many Genevese and Frenchmen. To these poor wanderers the heart and the purse of our Brother Russell were always open. In the early files of the Centinel will be found acknowledgments of his kindness and good offices from Brissot, afterwards the distinguished chief of the Girondists.

Another illustrious wanderer, now wearing the crown of France, with his two brothers, came amongst us, with means, probably, scarce sufficient for a week's subsistence. He sought the acquaintance of our Brother, and *his* Brother. He offered him some

books of great value. Without cheapening, he bought them. He penetrated the exigency. He gave the assistance circuitously, which he had too much delicacy, too nice an apprehension of the sensitiveness of greatness in distress, to offer directly, and this book of the several purchased, he kept through life.* To the claims of misfortune he never turned a deaf ear, whether his Brother came from afar or from the next door, whether he was a pauper or a prince. It is the distress, not the rank of the sufferer, which creates the claim to Masonic assistance.

In this connection, it is proper to state one fact which has been the occasion of much calumny. I mean the visit of Major Russell to the British frigate *Nymph*, during the last war. He has been represented, by party malevolence, as a traitor to his country, holding intercourse with, and giving aid and comfort to, the public enemy. The facts are these: Major Russell had a kinsman on board the *Nymph*, who was detained as a prisoner. Learning that the captain of the *Nymph* was a Freemason, he resolved to make an attempt to release him. He applied to the proper authorities for a flag of truce. It was refused. He then hired a pilot boat and cruised for several days before he could find the frigate. As he approached, no flag being displayed, he was hailed from the frigate and threatened; but he kept on his way, reached the frigate, inquired for the captain, made himself known as one of the Brotherhood, and received the hospitality which was his due. The captain recognised the Masonic obligation, released his kinsman, and with him four other Ameri-

*This book is now in the possession of the family of Major Russell.

can prisoners, and he returned to Boston triumphing in the success of this voyage of humanity.

If Freemasonry can mitigate the ferocity of war by acts like these, are Freemasons to be condemned as traitors? Is the spirit of philanthropy to be chained and fettered? Are men like watch-dogs, to be let loose only to rend the stranger? It is our business, my Brothers, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to visit the sick, to comfort the afflicted; and to liberate the captive. If in the performance of such duties, we offend against the laws of the land, then let the avenging arm of the law strike home. We can suffer, but we cannot overlook the obligations of humanity.

I return to the Columbian Centinel. The arrangement of the matter in that paper, according to my judgment, was perfect. At least, I have seen none better in the London papers of the first reputation. The capitals—the small capitals—the large, middling and small type—were exactly in the right places. The contents of the paper might be seen at a glance. The Centinel seemed to come everywhere like a familiar acquaintance. It told us just what we wished to know. The editor was not a closet man,—he kept about the streets,—he saw every body,—he knew most of the citizens. He liked to be in those places “where merchants most do congregate.” He gathered something from every current of conversation as it drifted by, and having ascertained the most interesting topics of the day, his paper on the next morning told the whole. If a comet appeared,—if there was a remarkable eclipse,—a meteor,—a terrific Aurora Borealis,—a thunder-storm—the Centinel

gave the popular account,—not a scientific analysis, but such particulars as the mass of its readers could understand. If a distinguished foreigner or stranger was in the city, the Centinel was the first to announce it. If a celebrated actor appeared on the stage, the Centinel was the first to tell us the story of his English life, the range of his acting, and his peculiar excellencies. The news from Europe was always first in the Centinel,—the *summary* precluded the necessity of reading the details. When Napoleon's mighty armies were moving about Europe, Major Russell, who was an accurate geographer, could always explain the exact position of the belligerents, and in speculating on the chances of battles, he seldom erred. He had more country correspondents than all the editors of Boston, and was sure to have the first returns of all interesting elections. If any new and interesting discovery was made; if any remarkable shipwreck occurred, the Centinel was the first to give the particulars. If Burke, Fox, Pitt or Sheridan—if Fisher Ames, Madison, Giles, Gouverneur Morris, or John Randolph, made brilliant or remarkable speeches, they were first seen in the Centinel. In short, the Editor seemed to know exactly what his readers wanted,—not by any profound knowledge of human nature,—but by the most assiduous and careful inquiries.

The poet's corner of the Centinel was always well filled, and from it many of us have gained our first knowledge of some of the greatest of the modern poets, particularly of Cowper, Wordsworth, and Southey. The editor seemed to have a peculiar relish for the fun and quaint humor of John Wolcott,

better known by his poetical name of Peter Pindar. He delighted in the revolutionary songs, and always had a place for our native poets. The effusions of Dwight, Barlow, Trumbull, Hopkins, Paine and Mrs. Morton, often enriched his columns. To him we owe that splendid stanza in the Song of Adams and Liberty, in which Washington is introduced, not that he wrote it, but in a manner he compelled Paine to write it.

In the diary of Samuel Davis, the indefatigable Antiquary of the Old Colony of Plymouth, under the date of July, 1817, this notice occurs: "This day I met with B. Russell, in State Street. He adverted to the first appearance of the Centinel in 1784, and repeated a stanza from Day, a pastoral poem, written by Cunningham, which appeared in some of the first impressions of the Centinel. I was present when the first paper (Warden and Russell, Editors,) was struck off in 1784, at which period I purchased Cunningham's poems, and loaned them to the editors. Mr. Russell said that these, with other similar contributions, were of great advantage to the early reputation of his paper, and that not any more popular things had appeared since. I was surprised at the readiness of his recollections. He replied, that he could repeat the whole of that beautiful pastoral."

Yet with all his keen perceptions of the beauties of the English Poets, he turned with deeper devotion to the sublime poetry of the scriptures. "He appeared," says the Rev. Dr. Jenks, "to entertain a marked respect for the scriptures. I well recollect his once telling me that a friend once said to him,

You can find nothing in the Bible so beautiful as that of Shakspeare,

“How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon the bank,” &c.

Yes, said the Major, I can, and referred to Deut. xxviii. 56.” Much as he admired the high gifted poets of modern ages, he turned with deeper—with the deepest devotion to those glorious prophet poets, whose lays are not only glowing with the fires of human genius, but burning with the fires of heaven and echoing the voice of God.

It now becomes expedient to trace the political career of Major Russell, when he was acting according to his own convictions, free from all party obligations.

In February, 1781, Congress recommended to the several States to impose a duty of five per cent. ad valorem on all foreign articles of merchandize, (with a few exceptions,) imported into the United States, to be applied to the payment of the interest of the debt contracted on the faith of the United States, and to the extinguishment of the principal. To render this recommendation valid, the assent of all the States was necessary. Rhode Island refused, and the project failed.

Intelligent men, both in public and private life, then began to perceive that the power given to Congress by the articles of Confederation, was insufficient to provide even for minor evils, and that for the great purposes of sustaining the public credit, inspiring confidence, providing the means of defence, and discharging the public debt, those articles were wholly inefficient.

As early as May, 1781, one Pelatiah Webster, an

obscure citizen of Philadelphia, but, according to Mr. Madison, an able man, published a pamphlet, in which, after setting forth the wretched condition of the country, he proposed remedies; one of which was, the establishment of a National Bank; and another, the assembling of a National Convention, to devise a National Constitution.

Congress had the power to declare war, but not the power to carry it on. A single State might defeat a scheme of taxation to which all the others assented; and a single State might stain the honor and violate the obligations of the other twelve. The sword, without the purse, was but a barren emblem of authority. In war and in negotiation, Congress were equally powerless. With great apparent powers, they really had none. Yet the faults of the system of government were charged upon them. The public evils sprung unquestionably from the feeble legislation of the States; but the people laid them at the door of Congress, and instead of strengthening their hands, they appeared determined to tie them.

Under these circumstances, the public debt had accumulated. No loans could be effected at home or abroad; the interest of the foreign debt was unpaid; the claims of the army were unsatisfied, and the soldiers and officers were clamoring for arrears.

For the service of the year 1783, \$3,200,000 were absolutely required, and on the motion of Col. Hamilton, a mission was sent to Rhode Island, to enforce upon the government of that State, the necessity of coming into the general system. This mission failed. Virginia retracted her assent, and Congress were left helpless and pennyless.

The low and significant murmurs in which the army had whispered their discontents, were swelling into loud tones of remonstrance, and threats were heard in the corners and secret places of the camp.

Early in 1783, Congress issued an earnest and solemn address to the States, entreating them to make some provision to sustain the public credit. "The obligations of common justice, good faith, and moral principles," they said, "required it."

Under these circumstances, after the most urgent solicitations, General Washington, who had always abstained from interfering in any measure unconnected with his command, was induced, on the 8th day of June, 1783, to issue his celebrated circular letter addressed to the Governors of the several States. He deemed the perils of the times so alarming that he overcame his scruples, and pressed upon the States the absolute necessity of an indissoluble union under one Federal head—a sacred regard to public justice—a competent peace establishment—a conciliatory spirit amongst the States, and an abandonment of local politics. He said every thing was tending to anarchy, and "that it was indispensable to the happiness of individual States, that there should be lodged somewhere a supreme power to regulate and govern the general concerns of the Confederated Republics, without which the union could be of no long duration."

The address of Washington failed to bring about the changes which he recommended, but it prepared the minds of many to receive them with favor afterwards.

Such was the situation of public affairs, when

Benjamin Russell established the *Columbian Centinel*. All were convinced that the Confederation was wholly insufficient for the purposes for which it was created. All acknowledged the necessity of a change, yet, with the exception of Pelatiah Webster and General Washington, none seemed ready for it. The country was at peace, but overwhelmed with debt. The public credit was at an end. The soldiers had returned to their homes, with a sense of wrong, discontented and sulky, and the national resources seemed wholly unavailable for want of the means to bring them forth. Strictly speaking, there were no parties. John Hancock was the Governor of Massachusetts, and it is believed that during the years 1784 and 1785, the *Centinel* supported his administration.

A question, however, was growing up which threatened at one time to assume some importance. Before the army was disbanded, a charitable society was formed by the officers, which took the name of *Cincinnati*, and the shape of a military Order, with a badge. The jealousies of several leading statesmen were roused, and they saw in this Order the germs of an aristocracy which might overthrow the liberties of the people. *Ædanus* Burke, of South Carolina, wrote a pamphlet against the Order. Even Count Mirabeau, that immaculate Frenchman, who was determined by his talents and daring to force his way back to society, from which his vices had excluded him, and who, after throwing France into an anarchy, sold himself to the court;—he too was afraid that the liberties of the American people would fall a sacrifice to the domineering ambition of the Cin-

cinnati, and he wrote a pamphlet against them. The people, however, were not alarmed. They had no suspicion that those who had built up their liberties would pull them down, and they never withdrew their confidence from their defenders, whether they belonged to the Order of Cincinnati or not. The denunciations against the Cincinnati were probably intended to excite popular jealousy against Washington, whose popularity had become so unbounded as to occasion envy, and there were some relics of the old factious spirit of 1778, remaining. All the politicians who then endeavored to effect the removal of Washington, were now clamoring against the Cincinnati. In this controversy, Major Russell, a soldier himself, lent a zealous and efficient aid to his former companions in arms.

In the winter of 1784-85, a new advocate for a stronger government appeared. Noah Webster, the Lexicographer, in a publication which appeared at that time, held out the first idea of a government which should operate directly on the people, without the intervention of the States, and should vest in Congress full power to carry its laws into effect.

During this period, the Centinel was the steady advocate for the inviolability of the public faith, and of a government with strength enough to maintain it.

A committee of Congress, in February, 1786, asserted in a report, that "a crisis had arrived when the people of the United States, by whose will, and for whose benefit, the Federal Government was instituted, must determine whether they would support their rank as a nation, by maintaining the public faith at home and abroad," or by refusing, would hazard it.

Such was the urgency of the circumstances of the nation in 1786, that even Virginia and Rhode Island assented to the five per cent impost. And then New York fell back, and the whole scheme was again frustrated.

Irritating and vexatious disputes sprung up between the States. All were endeavoring to fill their empty Treasuries by imposts. The trade of some of the States, carried on through the ports of others, was taxed. Connecticut taxed the imports from Massachusetts. By the navigation laws of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Maryland, the citizens of other States were accounted aliens. Treaties with foreign nations were violated by the States. Georgia made treaties and carried on wars with the Indians. Massachusetts raised and kept up troops without the consent of Congress. Pennsylvania and New Jersey had separate compacts, as if they were independent nations. In some of the States, paper money and tender laws had made inroads as deep on morals as on property. Creditors and debtors were in equal distress. The one could recover no debts,—the other could obtain no credit. Even the paper money was driven by its utter worthlessness, out of circulation, and there was scarcely any specie. There were neither naturalization or bankrupt laws. Wrongs were remediless and rights unprotected. If the moral sense of the people was not destroyed, it was put to sleep. Even the barter trade was carried on as amongst savages—at arms-length.

The distresses of the public and of individuals were alike. The pressure was equal. The foreign creditors pressed the American importers for their

debts; the importers pressed the country traders; they pressed their customers, and the customers comprised the great body of the people. The supplies were from the shops, for there were no domestic manufactures. The British withheld the western posts. Their ships and manufactures came into the American ports in many places free of duty, while heavy duties were imposed on the Americans in British ports; and there was no power in Congress to regulate trade, or to contravene these impositions. A dismemberment of the States, and the formation of separate confederacies, were subjects openly and familiarly discussed. The most friendly of the foreign nations entertained but faint hopes of the renovation of American prosperity. The others were exulting in the anticipated downfall of a Republic.

To complete this train of evils, a formidable rebellion broke out in Massachusetts, which is generally known by the name of Shays's Insurrection.

Massachusetts was determined to clear herself of the general wreck, and, by a vigorous effort, to restore her individual credit and to fulfil her obligations. To do this, she looked on insurrection in the face, and imposed taxes to such an enormous amount, that there was unquestionably great and general distress, and most ruinous sacrifices of property; but those who imposed the taxes suffered equally with those who opposed them. They had the sagacity to perceive that the disorder of the body politic was too dangerous to be dallied with. It had got beyond the reach of palliatives, and they had the firmness to apply the caustic.

It was at this period, that the services of Benjamin

Russell were invaluable to the State of Massachusetts. He occasionally passed between the Governor and the Camp, making his reports for the information of each ; but his greatest services were in another capacity.

In Boston, there were only two newspapers which had any considerable circulation. The Chronicle and the Centinel. The Chronicle did not advise a forcible resistance to the laws, but it was constantly agitating, exciting and inflaming the minds of the people, crushed as they were, under the weight of taxes, by professions of pity and sympathy ;—constantly tracing the evils which had fallen on the State to high salaries, the fee bill, the Courts and the Lawyers ;—constantly hinting about the dark and dangerous designs of the Cincinnati, and the military men of the revolution. The Senate was said to be of little use, and the Lieutenant Governor and Council of none at all. The people, it was said, were all equal, and men in office were entitled to no respect. They were the servants, and the people the masters. The words rulers and magistrates were aristocratic words—not to be used in a Republic. Such was the language of a leading newspaper, in the midst of an insurrection, and while the Insurgents were actually besieging the Court Houses. For every excess, riot and act of rebellion, there were palliations and excuses in the Chronicle, and the grand remedies which were proposed for all the public evils, were turning some men out of office,—suppressing the lawyers,—lessening the taxes,—reducing salaries and cutting down the fee-bill. All this was pretence, and all the intelligent persons who were using this language, (and

there were many,) must have known that if the whole administration was changed; if the salaries of the Governor, Judges and other public officers, were reduced to the standard of a day-laborer's wages,—if the fee-bill should have substituted coppers for dollars, and if every lawyer should have been driven from the State,—that the burthens on the people of Massachusetts would not have been diminished by the weight of a feather. The evil was too mighty for redress by State legislation, yet by the constant reiteration of this abuse, the Governor, the Judges, the lawyers and the laws, were brought into discredit.

On the other hand, the Centinel, with great spirit and energy, defended the laws and the Courts, and contended that at this crisis, the public order, the public peace, and the uninterrupted course of justice, were to be maintained at every hazard, and that it was the duty of every good citizen to rally around the constituted authorities, with arms in his hands, if arms were necessary, ready for every exigency. All the professions of love and pity for the people, were scouted as mawkish affectation and mock philanthropy. The Centinel contended that no community could exist without a civil organization, which included Governors, Courts, Judges, Lawyers and taxes,—that a Senate and Council were not only important, but necessary in a balanced government,—that the salaries of the public officers were scarcely adequate to their support,—that men who had laid down their arms, and retired quietly to poverty and obscurity, maimed with wounds, after seven years of hardship and suffering, with nothing for their services but the glory of their scars, were not proper objects for popular jealousy and distrust.

This newspaper was not only supplied with striking editorial articles, but it was filled with articles on these topics from the ablest writers of the period. Its energy and boldness sustained and animated the sinking hearts of the peaceful and timid, and kept alive in the midst of the desolations of these wild times, the spirit of loyalty to the Constitution, and of attachment to the great conservative principles of law, order and public justice.

The insinuations against the Military, in the Chronicle, were aimed at General Lincoln, who commanded the army raised for the suppression of the rebellion, General Brooks, who commanded the militia of Middlesex, and General Cobb, who commanded the militia of the Old Colony. Yet, by a mingled system of energy and humanity, they crushed the rebellion without shedding blood,—without requisitions,—without confiscations. They opened the Court Houses, restored the authority of the laws and the peace of the community.

Governor Bowdoin had done his duty as Chief Magistrate; consequently, he had his reward, and lost his election. Governor Hancock, who was supposed to be more indulgent towards the insurgents, returned to office in May, 1787, and in both branches of the legislature there was a majority who were not disposed to visit the late offences too roughly.

It now becomes expedient further to trace the progressive steps towards the establishment of a stronger government.

In March, 1785, certain Commissioners appointed by the States of Virginia and Maryland, to frame a compact between those States for the purpose of reg-

ulating navigation in the Chesapeake and its waters, assembled at Alexandria. They visited Mount Vernon, and while there agreed to propose to their respective States, the appointment of Commissioners to report to Congress a plan for the defence of the Chesapeake, and a system of uniform duties ; but it seems that nothing grew out of this recommendation, and Mr. Madison, who was a member of the General Assembly of Virginia, during the year 1785, complains much of the wayward and perverse temper of that body. A resolution, however, had been introduced by Mr. Tyler, proposing the appointment of Commissioners to meet the Commissioners of such States as should do the same, who should be instructed to devise a plan for the regulation of trade between themselves ; which plan being reported to the concurring States, and by them unanimously ratified, "would enable the United States in Congress, effectually to provide for the same."

This resolution was not received with favor by the Assembly, and was laid on the table. On the last day of the session, January 21, 1786, it was called up and unanimously adopted. The crisis was so alarming, that the Assembly, under the apprehension of great evils, deemed immediate action necessary.

Four States only, concurred in the measure proposed by Virginia ; being New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware ; and Commissioners from these States assembled on the 11th day of September, 1786, at Annapolis, in Maryland. They deemed it inexpedient to do more than unite in a Report to their own States. The report was drawn by Alexander Hamilton. The absolute necessity of provisions

for the regulating of trade, and for strengthening the hands of Congress, for such purpose, were strongly stated. The report concluded with recommending a General Convention of all the States at Philadelphia, in May, 1787, "to devise such further provisions as should appear necessary to render the Federal government adequate to the exigencies of the Union." From "*motives of respect*," copies of this Report were transmitted to the several States, not represented at Annapolis, and to Congress.

Although the names of Federalists and Antifederalists did not become generally current until the year 1787, yet perhaps the origin of those names may properly be referred to the year 1786.

The Federal party then comprised nearly the whole body of the public creditors ; most of the revolutionary officers ; the capitalists, and most of the merchants, ship owners, navigators, and persons whose business lay on the seas ; fishermen, mechanics, manufacturers, lawyers and clergymen. The great body of the planters at the South, and the farmers at the North, were Antifederalists ; but amongst their leaders were revolutionary Generals, experienced statesmen and learned men. The exhausted state of the country, and the distresses of the people, were urged by them as reasons against taxation, although they were compelled to admit that there was no other mode by which justice could be done to the public creditors. They preferred measures of temporary relief to any permanent system of revenue.

The Federalists were anxious to render the Union more permanent by establishing a strong and vigorous government under a Federal head. The Anti-

federalists were averse to any government which, by its positive and unchecked powers, should impair the dignity or the sovereignty of the States.

The Antifederal party was numerous and powerful in Virginia, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Maryland, and ultimately in New York, and the Federalists could not rely on a certain majority in any State.

It was at this early period, that Major Russell was found amongst the small band of original Federalists; and he was an ardent, sincere, enthusiastic Federalist,—an active and indefatigable Federalist,—a Federalist even before there was a constitution, a Federalist even before his party had taken its distinct name and character. From that name, through good and evil report, he never swerved; and as Oliver Cromwell said of the name of gentleman—"it was a good name once;" and circumstances were about to occur which brought that name before the nation and the world, with honor.

On the 23d of November, 1786, Virginia and New Jersey adopted the proposition of the Commissioners assembled at Annapolis, and elected delegates to a General Convention. On the 30th of December, Pennsylvania followed the example. On the 6th of January, 1787, North Carolina, although not represented at Annapolis, did the same, and on the 3d of February, 1787, Delaware acceded.

It must be recollected, that the Annapolis Convention was acting entirely independent of Congress, and only under the authority of the States which they represented. In these times, such a Convention would probably be called a Hartford Convention, and

denounced as a traitorous assemblage. Then, public virtue was not so exalted and refined ;—the sense of patriotism not so pure and nice, as in these days of political perfection. Then, there were no political Animal Magnetists to send out their wits to the polar ices, or up to the moon, to hunt up treason. The proposition of the anomalous Convention began to find favor with the people, and many, thinking it reasonable, were willing to try it.

Congress, however, did not receive the Annapolis Report with much favor ; but they referred it, and it rested in the hands of the Committee until the alarming state of affairs in Massachusetts, and the proceedings in the New York Assembly, who had voted to instruct their delegates to bring the proposition for a Convention before that body, quickened their movements ; and on the 21st day of February, 1787, the subject was called up. The Committee, in brief terms, reported a resolution, in which, after alluding to the Annapolis Report, they recommended to the States to elect delegates to a General Convention.

The objections in Congress to recommending a Convention, says Mr. Madison, were with some, “that it tended to weaken the Federal authority, by lending its sanction to an extra-constitutional mode of proceeding ; with others, that the interposition of Congress would be considered by the jealous as betraying an ambitious wish to get power into their hands by any plan whatever.”

Mr. Smith, and Mr. Egbert Benson, of New York, moved a substitute for the resolution reported by the Committee, by which the functions of the Convention would have been confined to amending the arti-

cles of the Confederation, and reporting the amendments to the States and to Congress. This substitute was not adopted.

Mr. Nathan Dane, and Mr. Rufus King, the delegates of Massachusetts, then offered another substitute. It did not vary essentially from that offered by the delegates of New York, and only defined the authority of the Convention with more precision, "who should be elected," said this substitute, "for the sole and express purpose of revising the articles of Confederation, and reporting to Congress, and the several Legislatures, such alterations and provisions therein, as should, when agreed to in Congress, and confirmed by the States, render the Federal Constitution adequate to the exigencies of government, and the preservation of the Union."

This substitute was adopted (with the exception of the delegates from Connecticut,) unanimously, and sent forth to the States.

As Congress had now given their sanction to the Convention, New York elected her delegates on the 6th of March, 1787. South Carolina on the 8th, Massachusetts on the 10th, and Connecticut on the 10th, of May.

Ten States had now chosen delegates. In New Hampshire and Maryland no appointments had been made, and Rhode Island formally refused to join in the measure; but a letter was addressed to the Convention, signed by the most eminent merchants and citizens of Providence, expressing their approbation of it.

The 14th day of May, 1787, had been appointed for the assembling of the Convention, but no quorum

appeared until the 25th. It was then organized, and General Washington appointed President.

On the 26th of May, Maryland elected delegates ; but delegates were not elected in New Hampshire until some time afterwards. When the New Hampshire delegates appeared, every State was represented, but Rhode Island.

The Convention soon ascertained that the objects for which they had been elected, could not be accomplished under the restrictions in the recommendation of Congress, and those in their own Commissions. The articles of the Confederation, in their judgment, could not be amended. If the Confederation was retained, each State must necessarily retain its entire sovereignty, and consequently Congress could have no efficiency. They would constitute an advising Council only. Under these circumstances, the Convention assumed the responsibility of taking upon themselves functions not named in the warrant of their authority, and to frame a Constitution, *de novo*.

During the period while the Constitution was under discussion, the exertions of Major Russell were indefatigable. Young, ardent, enthusiastic, he operated with great effect amongst that class of people to which he belonged—the mechanics of Boston. Upon them he was constantly inculcating his sentiments, and endeavoring to persuade them that a stronger government was absolutely essential to their interests, which were most completely involved in the interests of the merchants and men of property. They listened to him, for his arguments were sound. They believed him, for they saw he was in earnest ; and before the Constitution was promulgated, nearly the

whole body of mechanics in Boston had become Federalists.

The Constitution came forth, and then there was something tangible for consideration and discussion. Such an instrument could not fail to present much disputable matter, and its merits and demerits were most amply discussed and explained in the newspapers, and even our best informed statesmen may gain some new light by reading the Centinel for the year 1787.

The Constitution had been reported to Congress, and was by them transmitted to the several States, and Conventions called in each. It was ratified unanimously, by the Convention of Delaware, on the 7th day of December, 1787; by a large majority of the Convention of Pennsylvania, on the 12th day of the same December; by the Convention of New Jersey, unanimously, on the 18th day of the same month; by the Convention of Virginia, unanimously, on the 2d day of January, 1788, and by a large majority of the Convention of Connecticut, on the 9th day of January, 1788. On the same day (January 9th,) the Convention of Massachusetts assembled. John Hancock was elected President, and William Cushing, Vice President. Hitherto the Constitution had been well received. It had been adopted in three States unanimously, and in two by very large majorities; but it had now reached a State in which there was a fierce, numerous, and formidable opposition. The eyes of the whole nation were now turned to the Convention of Massachusetts. If they rejected the Constitution, the last hope was gone, and the cry soon would have been, "Every man to your

tents, O Israel." It is an unquestionable truth, that not only the Governor, and a majority of both branches of the Legislature, but of the people, and the Convention itself, were opposed to the adoption of the Constitution when the Convention assembled. The people of the counties of Suffolk, Essex, Plymouth and Barnstable, being commercial and sea-faring, were its advocates. The District of Maine was nearly divided, and in the other counties the majorities against the Constitution were large, decided, obstinate and apparently inveterate.

The deep rooted attachment, and the unbounded confidence which the Bostonians had always reposed in John Hancock and Samuel Adams, were abiding feelings, and although their sentiments respecting the Constitution, were known to be equivocal, and suspected to be averse, yet they would not discard them, and they were elected amongst the twelve delegates from the town. The ancient name of Winthrop, was still venerated by the people, and John Winthrop, whose views respecting the Constitution were similar to those of Hancock and Adams, was also a delegate from Boston. The sentiments of Dr. Stillman, another delegate, were not declared, and Dr. Jarvis, another delegate, had doubts.

No sooner had the organization of the Convention been completed and the mode of proceeding determined, than an ominous vote was passed. A committee was chosen to wait on Mr. Gerry, (who, in the Convention at Philadelphia had been one of the most decided opponents of the Constitution,) to request him to take a seat in the Convention, to answer questions; which was an indirect mode of obtaining for

Mr. Gerry, the privilege of mingling in the debates, and giving the weight of his name, talents and influence, to the Antifederalists.

A few days were sufficient to show, that although there was a prodigious preponderance of talent in the Convention in favor of the Constitution, yet that the weight of numbers was decidedly against it. Laboring under severe indisposition, Governor Hancock did not take the chair.

It was now a period of the most intense anxiety. It was thought throughout the States, that the rejection of the Constitution by Massachusetts, would be the precursor, not only of an entire dissolution of the Union, but of an universal anarchy. In the midst of the general despondency, the Boston merchants never despaired, but they were few. The Boston mechanics never despaired, and they were many.

Notwithstanding the odds, the merchants and mechanics were determined to fight the battle out, and their energy and resolution were equal to the crisis. They well knew that a strong manifestation of opinion on their part, would be respected, and all means not inconsistent with morality and honor, were used to effect their great object. Some were won by argument, some by persuasion ; perhaps some by family influences, and a most generous hospitality ; some by flattery and craft ; and some perhaps by soothing their self-love.⁽³⁾

During this anxious crisis, Major Russell was found in every place in which he could be useful. In the Convention reporting the debates ; in the streets conversing with the country delegates ; or catching an idea from Parsons, Gore, Cabot, or Dawes, urging

and entreating them to stand firm. No man did more to bring about an efficient union amongst them than Benjamin Russell, and it is believed that there was not a mechanic in Boston, of any name or note, with the single exception of Adam Colson, who did not ultimately become a supporter of the Constitution. Before their energetic action, the pride of Hancock, the obstinacy of Samuel Adams, and the hardness of John Winthrop, began to give way, and there were reasonable hopes that if Hancock could be brought out, with some propositions which should contain a salvo for the scruples of some and the pride of others ; in short, if some of the opponents of the Constitution could be furnished with an excuse, they might be induced to support it.

The idea of recommending amendments, was then started, and a plan was devised for ratifying the Constitution unconditionally, and recommending the adoption of the amendments as a part of it. On this scheme, Samuel Adams and Dr. Jarvis were consulted and agreed to support it. The amendments were draughted by Theophilus Parsons, and laid before Hancock. The public attention was now concentrated on this distinguished individual, into whose hands was thrown the fate of an Empire and the happiness of millions.

To swerve a man like Hancock, who had presided over the deliberations of the Continental Congress, from his predetermined opinions on the subject of civil government, by argument or persuasion, was not only a difficult, but an ungracious task. Nevertheless, at this perilous crisis, one man was found whose strong sense of duty overcame the scruples

of delicacy, and at the hazard of forfeiting a friendship which had been one of the principal solaces of his life—he undertook it.

The Rev. Dr. Samuel West, a delegate from New Bedford, had been the classmate of Hancock, and perhaps there was no person, certainly none in the Convention, for whom he cherished more regard, or to whom he would more readily listen. In Boston, his house was the home of the country clergyman, who never left it without solid tokens of his friendship. Yet there could not be greater contrasts than those presented by the Governor and the Minister. The one was rich, the other poor,—the one lived in a style of magnificence and hospitality congenial to his taste, and corresponding to his wealth in the town,—the other in a humble and obscure manner in the country,—the one, according to Brissot, the Girondist, disdained the sciences—the other was a profound scholar and devoted to them,—the manners of the one were polished, courtly and accommodating—of the other rough, uncultivated and uncompromising. Yet the statesman admired the bold and masculine temper, the vigorous understanding and prodigious learning of the friend of his youth, and he venerated his unaffected piety. He knew that he was no intriguer, that he had no selfish purposes to accomplish, and that his friendship was disinterested, and although enveloped in flannels and tormented with the gout, he received his visit with great cordiality.

With all his simplicity, Dr. West was a keen observer of character and a person of great sagacity. None better understood the temper of Hancock, or

could manage his occasional caprices and waywardness with more address. He commiserated his afflictions, which he lamented the more, inasmuch as it prevented him from doing a great deed for his country.

"Yes," said the reverend man, "it is on you, and you alone, Governor Hancock, that the fate of this nation depends. You must come forth to save it, even if you are borne in men's arms—even at the sacrifice of your life. Without your influence in its favor, the Constitution will be lost, and if it should result in that, we are a ruined people. For your own honor, complete the glorious work which you commenced by signing, as President of Congress, the Declaration of Independence. All good men and true patriots entreat your aid. Can you refuse it? If through your influence, this Constitution is preserved, your name will be immortal, and will be blessed by unborn millions."

Colonel Azor Orne, a delegate from Marblehead, and a friend and companion of Hancock, spared no effort to induce him to come out. "I can do nothing," said Hancock; "I am sick and feeble—I have no influence." [It was the Governor's habit to depreciate himself.] "Sir," said Orne, "you are not aware of the extent of your influence. Your sickness, instead of impairing, will strengthen it. Even the baize which swathes your limbs, will produce an impression. If you cannot speak, you will gather many around you like birds, by a whistle."

The solicitations of Dr. West and Colonel Orne, as well as those of several others, were well timed, for a strong impression had already been made on

the mind of Hancock by the proceedings of the mechanics—always his firm friends and supporters,⁽⁴⁾ and he had ascertained that the clergy, for whom he cherished great respect, were nearly unanimous in favor of the Constitution.⁽⁵⁾

Pressed on all sides as Hancock was, and finding that his most sincere and zealous friends were decided advocates of the Constitution, he yielded. Wrapped in flannels, unable to walk, he was borne from his coach by his servants into the Convention, and assumed the chair.

On the 30th of January, 1788, he explained his views to the Convention. He did not condemn the provisions, but the omissions of the Constitution. And to supply these defects, he made sundry propositions and declared himself in favor of ratifying the Constitution unconditionally, and of recommending the propositions which he had submitted, as amendments.

Samuel Adams then rose, and after speaking with great candor, distinctly avowed that he was in favor of this scheme, and moved the consideration of the propositions.

The debate was continued through Saturday, the 2d day of February, and finally, by an unanimous vote, the Amendments were committed to a committee of twentyfive.

"Time presses," said Mr Sedgwick, one of the committee, "we must sit on Sunday." "It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath," said the Rev. Dr. Hemmenway, "I have no scruples;" and the committee did sit on Sunday.

On Monday, February 4, the debate was opened

by the Rev. Thomas Thacher, of Dedham. He had doubted, but his doubts were dispelled, and his speech was serious, impressive, and in some parts very eloquent. In concluding, the Reverend gentleman alluded to the insinuations made against the supporters of the Constitution, as seeking either pecuniary or political advantages. "I am a poor man, I have the feelings of a poor man," said he, "if there are honors and emoluments in this proposed Constitution, I shall by my profession and circumstances in life, be forever excluded from them. My only wish is, that the people, in their day, may know the things which belong to their peace."

As soon as Mr. Thacher had concluded, the committee reported the Amendments with slight alterations; but seven of the committee, in committee, voted against the Report,—one was absent and one declined voting. Nine of this committee finally voted against the Constitution.

As soon as the report had been read in the Convention, Major Lusk expressed his dissent. The Constitution, he said, permitted slavery. No religious test was required. He shuddered to think that "Roman Catholics, Papists and Pagans," might hold office, and that Popery and the Inquisition might be established in America. The omission of a religious test, which so much alarmed Major Lusk, had reconciled the Rev. Mr. Backus, an eminent Baptist Minister from Middleborough, to the Constitution, and he addressed the Convention at length in its favor. "The imposing of religious tests," said he, "hath been the greatest engine of tyranny in the world. I abhor the wicked practice of slavery as much as any one, and I rejoice that this Constitu-

tion opens the door for its abolition, by prohibiting the slave trade after a certain period, and by permitting the States to free themselves from it."

Dr. Jarvis followed with an energetic speech in favor of the Constitution and the Amendments. The Convention then adjourned, and on the next morning, February 5th, Mr. Ames again rose. It was now perceived by all that the tide was on the flood, and the excitement was intense. The enemies of the Constitution had taken the alarm, and the hopes of its friends were brightening. The crisis was peculiarly adapted to the metaphorical scripture-like eloquence of Ames. He argued with great power in favor of the general provisions of the Constitution.

Mr Barrell, of York, immediately proclaimed his conversion—Dr Taylor quibbled—Mr Parsons demonstrated—Gilbert Dench, fearful of the issue, moved an adjournment of the Convention to a future day. The motion being negatived by a large majority, they adjourned to the next day.

On the next day, February 6, Dr. Stillman, who stood at the head of the Baptist priesthood in Massachusetts, and who as yet was wholly uncommitted, in a speech, solid, solemn, animated and eloquent, free from all cavils and doubts, delivered his conscientious convictions. "Whatever my previous opinion was," said he, "I now stand on firmer ground than ever respecting the proposed Constitution. I am ready to vote for it without any Amendments."

The Rev. Charles Turner, of Scituate, who had been steady in his opposition, then rose, and in a most solemn and priestly manner, seized upon the Amendments to make known and to justify his

change of opinion. "I have been averse to the reception of this Constitution, while it was considered merely in its original form," said he, "but as the Convention agree to recommend Amendments, I acknowledge my mind is reconciled. If we cannot get something better than the Confederation, we are an undone people."

Dr. Spring, of Watertown, who to this moment had cherished hopes that the Constitution would be rejected, throwing up his hands in utter despair, exclaimed—"Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men."

Captain Southworth would not give up, but Mr Symmes, of Andover, the champion of the cause, yielded to the current, and concluded a speech in support of the Constitution, with a declaration that he stood acquitted to his own conscience—he hoped to his constituents, and he knew he was acquitted before God. The debate was then closed by Governor Hancock. His speech was courteous and conciliatory. "The question now before you," said he, in concluding, "is such as no nation on earth, without the limits of America, has ever had the privilege of deciding upon. As the Supreme Ruler of the Universe has seen fit to bestow upon us this glorious opportunity, let us decide upon it—appealing to him for the rectitude of our intentions—and in humble confidence that he will yet continue to bless and save our country."

The question was then taken, and on the 6th day of February, 1788, the Constitution was ratified by a majority of 19—the yeas being 187, the nays 168. Several of its most inveterate opponents then declared

their adhesion, and the Convention adjourned to the next day. The news of the ratification of the Constitution ran with the rapidity of lightning through Boston and the surrounding towns, and when the members of the Convention proceeded to their respective lodgings, the streets were thronged with people. Those who had voted for the Constitution were received with cheers and acclamations. The people pressed forward to take them by the hand. The ice which had encrusted many a heart was melted, and some wept tears of joy.

It was a general saturnalia ; the Governor and the beggar rejoiced together.⁽⁶⁾

On the next day, February 7th, the Convention reassembled at the Old South. More adhesions were given in. They then adjourned to the Old State House. The Sheriff of Suffolk made solemn proclamation of the ratification of the Constitution, and the Convention adjourned *sine die*.

A feast for the members of the Convention was provided in the Senate Chamber by the citizens of Boston. They feasted high, and no warning appeared on the walls. Celebrations, processions and convivial meetings followed, not only in Boston, but throughout the country.⁽⁷⁾

The political philosophy ; the deep investigations of the science of government ; the sound sense and splendid eloquence displayed in the Convention of Massachusetts, would have been lost to the world had it not been for the indefatigable industry of Major Russell. There were no stenographers and reporters by profession at that time in Boston. He reported and published all the debates. There are full reports

of the debates, in the Conventions of Virginia and New York, and of the first Convention of North Carolina ; but it is easy to perceive the reporters' style in the whole. Doubtless the arguments, and some strong and striking expressions, are correctly given ; but the peculiarities of the different speakers cannot be traced in any reports excepting those of Major Russell, who has stamped each speech with the speakers own marks.

Massachusetts was the sixth State which ratified the Constitution. Still it was very doubtful whether it would become the supreme law of the land. It was necessary that the assent of nine States at least, should be obtained. In Rhode Island and North Carolina, the prospect was hopeless. In Maryland, the opposition was led by Luther Martin and Samuel Chase, two of the most distinguished citizens of that State. Yet it was ratified on the 28th of April, 1788, and in South Carolina, after a severe struggle, on the 23d day of May. On the 25th of June, New Hampshire followed the example of Massachusetts, and ratified the Constitution, recommending amendments. This accession completed the Union and saved the Constitution. But without the accession of Virginia and New York, this great work would have been imperfect. In both States, the parties were nearly divided, and in the Convention of Virginia, the weight of talent and character was with the Anti-federalists. The ratification, however, obtained on the 26th day of June, and in New York on the 26th day of July, by a majority of five votes.

"Tantæ molis erat Romanam condere gentem."(6)

General Washington was inaugurated as President

of the United States, on the 30th day of April, 1789, and the new Constitution went into operation.⁽⁹⁾

Mr Russell was a zealous supporter of all the measures of Washington's administration—the funding system—the assumption of the State debts—the imposts—the protection of domestic manufactures—the internal taxes—the excise law—the National Bank—the measures for suppressing the Western Insurrection—and the foreign policy. For this support, he has often been denounced as the enemy of the republican doctrines of Mr. Jefferson, whose aversion to all these measures was undisguised. I have no doubt that he acted from his convictions, but it is possible that those convictions might have been influenced by his feelings. As the Editor of a leading newspaper, he was compelled to choose between Washington and Jefferson. It was not in his heart to believe that Washington could do wrong. No veteran soldier who had followed Napoleon along the blazing path of his victories, was more devoted to his chief than was Benjamin Russell to Washington, and it is possible that like Cicero with respect to Plato, he would have preferred to have gone wrong with Washington than right with the rest of the world. If it were so, it is no evidence of weakness, because, in a Republic, many questions must arise on which we are compelled to make a rapid decision, and that decision must necessarily depend on the degree of confidence which we repose in the advocates or opponents. Such questions were often presented to the Editor of the Centinel, and shall we blame him for trusting to Washington? In this he was disinterested, and we shall see that his fidelity was subjected to some cruel tests.

The year 1789, was distinguished by two great events. On the 30th of April, Washington took the oaths as President of the United States. Our Constitution went into operation and we became, in truth, a nation—one—and I hope, indivisible. Five days afterwards, (May 5th,) the States General of France assembled, in which the people were represented, and for the first time admitted to real participation of the political power. That day marks the era of the French Revolution.

The creation of a nation, and the emancipation of a nation, were stupendous events, and being almost simultaneous, it would indeed have been wonderful if the latter event, connected as it was with the former, should not have caused, amongst the Americans, a most intense excitement, and it would have been wonderful indeed if our departed Brother, whose temperament was ardent, sanguine, and almost fiery, should not have shared a common enthusiasm. Every circumstance tended to increase the excitement. When the Bastille was destroyed, the people, it was said, had broken their fetters. The key of that terrible fortress was sent by Lafayette to Washington, and hung up at Mount Vernon as a trophy. Every ferocious act of the French was excused on the ground of necessity. Although our own Revolution had left no stain of blood on our land, yet we were willing to attribute their excesses to a higher enthusiasm in the cause of liberty—our devotion was lukewarm, for we had laid no human victims on her altars.

When the German armies invaded France, many Americans mounted the tri-colored cockade—*Ca-Ira*

and *Carmagniole* resounded through our streets. In our phrensy we—we Americans, denounced Lafayette as a traitor, because to save his life he had eluded the men of blood who were sent to the camp to take it. Dumoriez became the hero of the day. Civic feasts were instituted throughout America in honor of his victories, triumphal odes were sung, oxen were roasted. The Clergy even began to catch glimpses of the Millenium, and prayed to God to favor the arms of a people just about to renounce his worship. Even the horrible atrocities of the 10th of August, 1792, and the massacre of the prisoners in September, were overlooked, for France had dethroned a king and established a Republic!

From a careful inspection of the files of the *Centinel* up to this period, I cannot find that the sentiments of the editor had undergone any change.—Burke, once so idolized in America, was denounced for writing against the French revolution, yet the articles signed Publicola and written by Mr John Quincy Adams, vindicating the doctrines of Burke, were admitted into his columns. He seems to have pursued his usual policy of maintaining his own independence and opening his paper to all well written articles on either side, but events were approaching which induced a more decided course.

Intelligence was received nearly simultaneously, of the execution of the King of France, the declaration of war by France against Great Britain and Holland, and the arrival of the new French Minister, Genet, at Charleston, in South Carolina, and soon afterwards Washington issued the proclamation of neutrality.

The execution of the King startled some who had until that act, viewed the revolution with undiminished favor; but with the great mass of the American people, no disgust was felt. They easily transformed our great and good ally, as they were fond of calling Louis XVI., into a tyrant; and all tyrants deserved death.

The Americans had found in Louis XVI. the greatest of benefactors, yet throughout America there was no public manifestation of regret for his death except in Providence, where the bells were tolled. The war between Great Britain and France had aggravated the enthusiasm of the people into a raging phrensy. The proclamation of neutrality was denounced as a cowardly abandonment of the great cause of human freedom, and the rights of man. The war cry resounded through the land. War—war with the tyrants who had combined against liberty and France. War with that infamous tyrant, George III. Peace, friendship and perpetual alliance with the glorious Republic of France.

In the midst of this phrensy, Genet arrived. His journey through the Southern States, from Charleston to Philadelphia, was like the triumphal progress of a Roman prefect. He was the first Republican Minister from the new born Republic. He was caressed, feasted, toasted, honored, and heard nothing but denunciations of Great Britain and professions of ardent attachment to France. Washington at the same time journeyed from Mount Vernon to Philadelphia, unnoticed and unheeded.

Naturally, Genet was neither rude or unamiable, but he was instructed to magnify the French Repub-

lic, and to carry out the system of regenerated diplomacy, by threats and bullying. The soft, subtle and polite modes of negotiating, the nice etiquette, and guarded decorum, like embroidery, hair powder and laced ruffles, were discarded, and France now proposed to gain her objects, not so much by craft and intrigue as by insolence and violence. Threats were substituted for persuasion, and bluster for remonstrance. The manifestations of popular attachment led Genet into many grievous errors, and he thought it was as easy to drive an American President out of office, as it was to dethrone, and behead a French King. He mistook the roar of city mobs for the voice of the people. He had not the least conception of the numbers of those quiet citizens whose confidence in Washington nothing could shake, amongst whom there were then at least 200,000 persons who had been under his command at different periods of the revolution.

. Amongst the first proceedings of Genet, was the institution of a Club at Philadelphia, on the model of the Jacobins. Affiliated clubs soon sprung up in New York, Boston, Charleston and Lexington, in Kentucky, which took the name of Democratic Societies, in which, Washington was daily denounced as the ally of despots,—the tool of Great Britain,—a Tyrant, who was attempting to govern the country by edicts instead of laws; who had attempted to paralyze the glorious cause of liberty by a proclamation of neutrality.

Some of the newspapers too at this period assumed a tone of abuse against Washington of unparalleled effrontery. "The publications in Freneau's and

Bache's papers," said Washington, "are outrages on common decency."

According to the account of the first President Adams, Washington's House, at Philadelphia, was surrounded by mobs daily, huzzaing, clamoring for war with England, cursing Washington, and calling out—"success to the French patriots—the virtuous republicans." According to him, nothing saved Washington from gross personal indignities and outrages, but the yellow fever.

The yellow fever did indeed come amongst the people of Philadelphia in the midst of this wild phrensy. The pestilence walked through the city at noon-day, with the tread of a giant, and death was triumphant in every street. The enemies of earthly Kings bowed down before the King of terrors.

Genet had defied the government. He had endeavored to erect the French Consulates into Judicial tribunals. He had undertaken to levy war within the United States, by instituting expeditions against Florida and Louisiana. He had insulted the President. He had threatened to appeal from the President to the people. His violations of international law and his audacious insolence could no longer be tolerated, and Washington demanded his recall. He was recalled, and his conduct was disavowed by the French Government. He dared not return to France, for he was a Girondist, and the dreaded triumvirate,* which then ruled France, were thirsting for his blood, and he remained in America.

During this alarming and anxious crisis, our Brother

* Marat, Danton and Robespierre.

Russell was found on the side of Washington, defending the government with spirit and energy, animating the timid and arousing the bold ; maintaining the contest against numbers with an undaunted heart and a persevering pen, and in this region doing much to resist that fierce spirit which seemed at one time to be endeavoring to establish Jacobin Clubs, as the legitimate organs of government. His fidelity was soon subjected to a severer test, because it brought him into direct opposition to the opinions and feelings of the great mass of his fellow-citizens of Boston, and of the great body of the mechanics, with whom he was particularly associated.

At one period during the year 1793, this country was on the eve of a war with Great Britain. To avert this evil, Washington sent Mr Jay to that country as a special Envoy. He negotiated a treaty which was ratified by the Senate. Before the President had signed it, a Virginia Senator, in violation of the obligation of secrecy, communicated a copy to Bache, the editor of the *Aurora*, and he immediately repaired to Boston. Copies were circulated throughout Massachusetts, and there was a general outcry against it. The moderate and sober-minded citizens, overborne by the din, remained silent and quiet, and the agitators had the field to themselves. The Boston Town Meeting was holden on the 10th day of July, 1795. The citizens, excited already by the publications in the *Chronicle*, were lashed into a phrensy by the inflammatory eloquence of Dr. Jarvis, who, as a declamatory orator, was unrivalled. The supporters of the administration seemed to shrink from the contest. The venerable Joseph Hall was the solitary

advocate of the Treaty. He concluded his speech by reprobating a proceeding which he said would have a tendency to "unsenatorize the Senate." Jarvis instantly caught the expression. "The gentleman," said he, "would not unsenatorize the Senate. I will never consent to unpopularize the people." Faneuil Hall rang with applauding shouts. The torrent could not be resisted. Resolutions in the nature of a remonstrance against the Treaty, were carried by acclamation. The resolutions, together with a letter from the Selectmen of Boston, were transmitted by special express to the President. A small number of Bostonians, headed by Thomas Russell, and including (with two or three exceptions,) every great merchant in the town, expressed their dissent to these proceedings in writing, and to this paper the name of Benjamin Russell is appended. The Chamber of Commerce, as a body, passed resolutions approving the Treaty. The treaty was condemned in several other towns of Massachusetts. The great powers of Samuel Dexter [were vainly put forth in the Charlestown Town Meeting to support it. In Philadelphia, mobs surrounded the houses of the British Minister and the British Consul. The treaty was publicly burnt, and Mr Jay hung in effigy. In Charleston, South Carolina, many outrages were committed. John Rutledge, Chief Justice of the United States, took the lead in the disorganizing proceedings, and defiled his ermine in the muddy kennels of faction. In Richmond, Virginia, Chancellor Wythe took the lead in opposition to the treaty, and in New York, the great families of Clinton and Livingston and Aaron Burr. In the wild uproar of the mob, even Hamilton's voice was

silenced. In many places, Mr Jay was hung in effigy. He was denounced in countless resolutions as a traitor. The gold of Pitt had seduced this eminent citizen from his duty, it was said. To increase the embarrassments of the President, the French Minister, Adet, formally complained of the Treaty.

In the midst of this tempest of popular fury, appeared the President's reply to the selectmen of Boston, in which he coolly informed them that the Constitution had assigned to the President the power of making treaties, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. He clearly perceived that this crisis demanded the exertion of all the high qualities of his nature, and that, like the ancient prophet, it was for him to stay the plague. He alone could save this nation from a war with Great Britain, and what was worse, an alliance offensive and defensive with revolutionary France. He did not disdain the popular approbation, but it was but dust in the balance if it was to be preserved only by the sacrifice of his public duties. Calm, cold and taciturn in his general deportment, it was in a crisis like this, that he displayed those high and heroic qualities which always buoyed him up against the tempests of the times,—that holy courage which rose in proportion to the danger, and that firmness and hardihood which grew stronger under the pressure of adverse circumstances. He repudiated all extra-constitutional interference in directing the course of public policy, and unawed by the clamors of mobs, he placed himself on the high ground of constitutional privilege and conscientious duty, and he signed the treaty.

The warning voice of Washington sobered the

people. Their delirious impulses passed off and they began to reflect. They saw him almost alone gallantly breasting the storm. They knew he was virtuous. They knew he was wise. If the Father of the Republic was false, none could be trusted, and their confidence began to return. Congress assembled, but it was apparent that the Representatives had not as yet caught the spirit of the people. Before they would vote the appropriations, they called for the papers relating to the negotiation. The President refused them. The denunciations were renewed. It was said that the President also had felt the touch of Pitt's gold; but these denunciations were now confined to the demagogues. The people were sickened at the abuse of Washington. Nevertheless, the House of Representatives persisted in showing their disapprobation of the treaty in every preliminary vote, and there was a strong apprehension that the appropriations to carry the treaty into effect would be withheld. Under this apprehension, a memorial was circulated amongst the citizens of Boston in favor of the treaty, which was signed by the great body of merchants and mechanics; for the mechanics, who had almost unanimously condemned the treaty, were now as unanimous in its favor. The enemies of the treaty, however, lest the memorialists should be supposed to speak the sentiments of the town, called a Town Meeting, and that Town Meeting was holden on the 25th of April, 1796. Again, in the midst of the storm, the rolling thunder of Jarvis was heard; but a new and bright planet blazed through the darkness and dispelled the clouds. HARRISON GRAY OTIS, for the first time, came before the people on a

public question, and they, to their delight, discovered that the talent of popular eloquence was not a monopoly. The memorial was approved by an immense majority, and the people of Boston, the first who abandoned, were the first to return to the household of the Father of the Republic.⁽¹⁰⁾

I will now call your attention to the contemporaneous account in the Centinel of this fiery contest and unparalleled victory, for the purpose of showing the generous, magnanimous, forbearing spirit which our ardent, enthusiastic and high tempered Brother could display even in the moment of victory towards his political enemies after a defeat,—and I pray you to contrast it with the taunting, depreciating, bullying and blackguard spirit of our own times,—a spirit which would stamp upon a prostrate foe. After stating that the Meeting was adjourned from Faneuil Hall to the Old South—he says, “Reassembled here, Dr. Jarvis opened the debate, in a very eloquent address to the feelings of the vast assemblage then before him. He was followed on the same side by Mr. Austin, Mr. Cooper and Mr. Morton. They were replied to by Mr. Otis, Dr. Warren, Colonel Dawes, and Mr. Jones, with great eloquence, investigation, effect, and, we think, conviction. If it were not invidious to distinguish, where all were eminent, we should pay that homage of respect to the eloquence, independence and general knowledge of Mr. Otis, which was rendered by every one who heard him. But we forbear; it were impossible to do justice to the research, animation and independence which characterised *all* the speeches, and which, notwithstanding the sanctity of a place of worship, drew forth involuntary bursts of applause.”

Major Russell has generally been viewed as a bigoted politician, who could see no errors in his political friends, or merits in his political foes. He spoke well of his friends, it is true, and those friends were George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, General Knox, General Lincoln, Fisher Ames, Samuel Dexter and Harrison Gray Otis; and possibly an excuse might be found for speaking well of such friends, especially when they were charged with corruption and treason; but there never was an Editor so magnanimous to his political foes. Dr. Jarvis was at the head of the party in opposition to Washington in Massachusetts—the most eloquent, the ablest, the most intrepid and the most formidable of his party, yet, after a careful inspection of the files of the Centinel, I can find no abuse of Dr. Jarvis, but many articles in his favor.⁽¹¹⁾

The change of opinion with respect to the Treaty, spread through nearly all the towns in Massachusetts. In the old county of Hampshire, 56 towns voted to sustain the Boston memorial, and the same spirit began to prevail in other States, particularly in New England and New York. While the melodious strains of Otis were yet lingering on the ears of the Bostonians, the Boston representative at Philadelphia was entrancing the Congress. The speech of Fisher Ames, on the British Treaty, will stand the criticism of posterity. Like “the adamant of Shakspeare,” it will resist the ever wearing currents of time. It charmed his enemies. Those who detested the Statesman admired the Orator. The very serpents of faction, for once, put forth their head from their holes, to listen and not to bite. The

appropriations were voted. The peace and the honor of the country were saved, and Washington came forth from the struggle triumphant.

During this trying period, the Centinel, in my judgment, of all the newspapers in the United States which supported the Treaty and defended Washington, was the most efficient. With the exception of General Hamilton, and perhaps Mr. King, its writers were the ablest. The Editorial articles were spirited, appropriate and exactly adapted to the popular feeling. The Editor went neither too fast nor too slow. He went with the people, *pari-passu*, but he started them on the march.

It was at this period also, that William Cobbett, in support of Washington and the Treaty, first exhibited those marvellous powers in political controversy which subsequently made him the wonder of England and the terror of Ministries.

Perhaps, my Brethren, I have wearied you with all these details, but I think they were necessary to the illustration of the character of our departed Brother, who, although an humble, was a most efficient, actor in all those great transactions which led to the establishment of the Federal Constitution, and afterwards formed one of that small band who gathered around Washington, to uphold it when it was shaking on its base. While gazing on those magnificent structures which seem to defy the ravages of time and the fury of the tempests, we seldom think of those who laid the foundations.

During the whole of this anxious period, there were, so to speak, no parties—at least no organized parties. It was impulse and self-conviction which

influenced the people. They were not fettered by party obligations. The mind was not in chains. They were not controlled by that dreadful system, which, like that of the Jesuits, changes the heart into a machine, puts conscience in commission, and compels every free citizen, like a dog, to wear a collar! There are abundant proofs of the independence with which men acted at the early period of the Republic. The ratification of the Constitution by the Convention of Massachusetts is one. The change of opinion with respect to the British Treaty is another.

Our Brother Russell took his own ground, and acted on his own convictions, and he was not one of those who are frightened whenever they find themselves in a minority.

This honest period of the Republic, terminated with the administration of Washington, and then commenced the reign of parties,—violent, bitter, implacable parties. In politics, men no longer acted for themselves, but for their parties, and individual responsibility in a great degree ceased. The merits and the errors of their proceedings are to be attributed to the party, far more than to the individuals. It is needless to say, that Major Russell was a zealous member of the Federal party, and so remained until he caught, as he thought, a glimpse of the Millennium, and from the exuberance of his own good feelings yielded to the sad delusion, that the era of good feelings had actually arrived, and in the hope that a more glorious light was about to appear, he consented that the lights which had guided his footsteps through the tempest, and the darkness, should be extinguished, and that the Federal party should be superannuated.

In the wane of life, we recur with fondness to our early impressions, thoughts and feelings. Emerging from the chaos of parties which succeeded the Federalists, our departed friend at last completed the wide circle of his political life. In June, 1775, he entered the public service—a Whig. On the 4th day of January, 1845, at the age of 83, he died—a Whig.

Major Russell was not so much distinguished for splendid talents and great actions as for usefulness. From the age of 13, until the close of life, there was scarcely a moment in which he was not occupied in doing something, as he thought, for the public good; and in all public trusts, he displayed more devotion to the public interests than his own. Those trusts were many, and he neglected none, but executed them with his best ability and with great success. He was a faithful Soldier and an able Editor. He was Grand Master of the Freemasons; Commander of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company; President of the Board of Health, the Mechanic Association, and of the Common Council, and an Alderman; a Representative of the City of Boston; a Senator of the County of Suffolk, and a Councillor of the Commonwealth.

Who can say, that he was not in each capacity respectable and useful? Who can say, that within his sphere, he has done more positive good to his fellow-men—than Benjamin Russell?

N O T E S .

Note 1—page 12.

The Massachusetts Spy had gained, perhaps, the highest place amongst the Whig newspapers of North America. Its decided and sarcastic tone; the ability of its writers; the boldness of its doctrines, and the energy and spirit with which it was conducted, had attracted the attention of the community, and the ill-will of the Tories. Isaiah Thomas was the editor, and having been often summoned to appear before the Governor and Council, he had steadily refused to obey. Exasperated by his contumacy, the *Executive* ordered prosecutions in the Courts for libels. Mr. Thomas escaped conviction on every indictment. The leading patriots were pledged to protect and defend him. He was marked as a victim; his office received the emphatic name of the "Sedition Factory." Further prosecutions and violence were threatened. The British had the military occupation of Boston, and the patriots came to the determination that the press must be sustained, and, as in Boston it might be suppressed by force at any hour, that it should be removed to the inland town of Worcester. With much address, Colonel Bigelow and Dr. Warren effected the removal of the press, and several cases of types, across Charles river, and conveyed them to Worcester. Mr. Thomas joined the militia and fought at Lexington and Concord. On the day succeeding the battles, he repaired to Worcester to assume an employment not less efficient in revolutionary movements than that of arms, and on the 3d of May, 1775, the Massachusetts Spy was issued at Worcester, and became the leading and official newspaper of the patriots.

Note 2—page 14.

Bishop Parker delivered the address, and amongst the Brethren present were Samuel Cabot, Paul Revere, Dr. John Warren, Perez Morton, Samuel Dunn and William Scollay.

Note 3—page 33.

Mr. Dunbar, of Stoughton, it is said, was much influenced by his kinsman, the late Dr. Danforth.

Theophilus Parsons undertook to overcome the scruples of the Rev. Mr. Perley, of Maine. "I cannot support a Constitution which does not acknowledge the existence and moral government of the Supreme Being," said the minister. "A truth, which all admit, requires no formal acknowledgment: the acknowledgment might create a suspicion that some did doubt," said the lawyer. "The Jews, after sinning and punishment, solemnly acknowledged the Lord," said the Minister. "That was because they had denied him and worshipped idols, but we solemnly acknowledge, and

publicly worship him at stated times," said the Lawyer. "I suppose," continued Mr. Parsons, "that in the course of your ministerial labors, you have preached from texts in every book of the Old Testament." "Yes," said Mr. Perley, "I probably have." "You have preached from texts in the Book of Esther?" "Doubtless I have," said Mr. Perley. "Do you know, that in the Book of Esther," said Mr. Parsons, "there is not a single allusion to the Supreme Being?" "It is not possible," said Mr. Perley. "Look!" said Mr. Parsons. The search was made. "You are right," said Mr. Perley. "Now, Sir," continued Mr. Parsons, "if in one of the canonical books, which are of paramount authority for the religious and moral government of man, there is no acknowledgment of the Supreme Being, why should such an acknowledgment be indispensable in a Constitution—an instrument which is merely the work of man? If the inspired writers did not deem such an acknowledgment necessary, why should we pretend to be more wise and more devout than the Prophets?" "My scruples are removed," said the Minister.

Note 4—page 42.

Amongst the most intimate friends and associates of John Hancock, were Col. Thomas Dawes and Nathaniel Balch. "When I visited the Governor," says Brissot, "I found him in the greatest familiarity with a hatter!" The latter was Balch,—a man not only of a fine majestic appearance, but of exquisite humor, delightful social qualities, unwearied benevolence and sterling integrity. Colonel Dawes, long at the head of the mechanic interest, was a person of great sagacity, an adroit politician and an accomplished gentleman. That the mechanics exercised an efficient influence at this crisis, is a fact which cannot be controverted. One of the delegates to the Convention once said to the writer, "Dr. West, no doubt, had much influence with Hancock, but it was the Boston mechanics who frightened not only him, but Samuel Adams and John Winthrop, into the support of the Constitution."

Note 5—page 42.

The grandfather and father of John Hancock, were country clergymen,—the first of Lexington, the last of Braintree, now Quincy.

Note 6—page 46.

At this joyous moment even the inveteracy of Adam Colson gave way. When his boarders, (all of whom were in the majority,) approached, he ran into the street without his hat—seized his wig—swung it around his head and huzzaed for the Constitution. During the whole night, parties of young men were traversing the streets, and in the wild exuberance of their joy, singing songs of triumph. Colson's windows were threatened, but his boarders saved them. The house was spared and the boarders cheered.

Dr. West returned from an evening party with his huge pockets literally crammed with silk stockings, fine handkerchiefs, pieces of cambric, &c. The good man was uneasy lest in his absent moments he might, unconsciously, have pocketed them, and was anxious to restore them. His friends quieted his scruples. "Those articles, doctor," said they, "came honestly into your pockets. *Take the goods the gods provide ye.*"

Note 7—page 46.

Mr. Wales, the delegate from Dorchester, got up a procession in which machinery was introduced. "Old Testament times have returned," said Holder Slocum. "As I passed through Dorchester I met Tubal Cain, instructor of every artificer in brass and iron."

Note 8—page 47.

The writer is aware that the narrative of the progress of the States towards the establishment of the Federal Constitution, does not, strictly speaking, appertain to the biography of Major Russell, but he was induced to take this course in consequence of the suggestions of gentlemen whose opinions he was bound to respect. In his sphere, Major Russell performed an important part in bringing about the result, and it was thought by those gentlemen to whose opinions the writer deferred, that there would be nothing incongruous in such a course, and that the connection of Major Russell with the great affairs of the times, was sufficient to warrant it, especially in all that related to the proceedings of Massachusetts; and it was further said, that there were many interesting facts connected with the ratification of the Constitution by the Convention of Massachusetts, which were fast hastening to that oblivion in which the deeds of men are concealed, and unless arrested and brought to light would be forever lost. The writer was well acquainted with several of the delegates to the Convention, and has often heard many of the anecdotes which he has related from their own lips. He had also the benefit of a long and interesting conversation with the Hon. JOHN DAVIS, late Judge of the District Court of Massachusetts, and, for a time, during the administration of Washington, Comptroller of the Treasury, who is the only survivor of that Convention, standing, as it were, alone on the isthmus which connects the infancy and the manhood of the American Republic—speaking of things which he knew and saw, upon which time has already cast deep shadows. Long may he live to delight his friends by his virtues, and instruct them by his wisdom.

Note 9—page 48.

Major Russell fell under much reproach at this time, (1789,) for advocating as it was said, the expediency of attaching titles to persons holding certain offices; from which it was inferred that he had a leaning towards the usages of Aristocracy. In the army and navy, titles are necessary to designate the grades of office, but by the laws and constitutions of the States, as well as of the United States, no titles are recognized, except by Massachusetts, and by her applied only to the persons holding the offices of Governor and Lieutenant Governor. All others are merely titles by courtesy.

When Vice President Adams first took the chair of the Senate of the United States and addressed that body, he used the term, *Most Honorable*, applying it to the whole Senate. Major Russell applied it to the individual Senators. As it was a mere title of courtesy, there was no difference in principle, whether a person was styled Honorable, Most Honorable, or Right Honorable. [Excellency was a higher title than either, and during the revolutionary war that title was applied to the Major Generals.] On this ground it was a matter of taste, and the poet says--

"De gustibus, non est disputandum."

The writer can perceive no difference in the practice of parties. All seem to be equally fond of decorating the names of *their* leading men with titles. The usage is universal; yet, in his opinion, General Charles Lee, of revolutionary notoriety, discovered a more manly and correct taste. Sick of the title of Excellency, with which he was daily addressed, he disclosed his sentiments to Patrick Henry, then the Governor of Virginia. "There is," said he, "a barbarism crept in among us that extremely shocks me. I mean those tinsel epithets, with which (I come in for my share,) we are so beplastered: His Excellency, and His Honor; The *Honorable* President of the *Honorable* Congress, or the *Honorable* Convention. This fulsome nauseating cant may be well enough adapted to barbarous monarchies; or to gratify the adulter-

ated pride of the *magnifici in pompous Aristocracies*; but in a great, free, manly, equal Commonwealth, it is quite abominable; for my own part, I would as soon they would put rats-bane in my mouth, as the *Excellency* with which I am daily crammed. How much more true dignity was there in the simplicity of address amongst the Romans! Marcus Tullius Cicero, Decimo Bruto, Imperatori, or Caio Marcello, Consuli, than to His Excellency Major General Noodle, or to the Honorable John Doodle. My objections are perhaps trivial and whimsical; but for my soul I cannot help starting them. If, therefore, I should sometimes address a letter to you without the *Excellency* tacked, you must not esteem it a mark of personal or official disrespect, but the reverse."

Note 10—page 58.

Cheverus, the Catholic Priest, afterwards a Cardinal, in the rapture of his admiration, threw his arms around Otis, and while tears were streaming down his cheeks, exclaimed, "Future generations, young man, will rise up and call thee blessed."

Note 11—page 59.

During the very heat and fury of this contest, these stanzas appeared in the Centinel:

"Jarvis, no more with the petulant train
The step of contention pursue;
No slander the *truth* of thy soul can arraign,
Nor the strength of thy genius subdue."

* * * * *

"Where'er thy Columbia her bosom displays,
To thee shall the plaudit belong;
Thine eloquence still the lov'd theme of her praise,
Thy virtues the pride of her song."

When piercing the cell where pale poverty lies,
On the couch of distemper and woes,
Thy care the sweet balm of existence supplies,
Or the cup of compassion bestows."

* * * * *

"As the planet of evening extends its mild rays
To yield the poor pilgrims relief—
Thus the glow of thy heart, its soft blessing displays!
And cheers the dark mansion of grief."

Like the vertical Summer's meridian line,
The beams of thy genius descend;
Too intensely they dazzle, too ardently shine,
And consume what they mean to defend.

Then Jarvis forbear—to *thy virtues* retire—
For ne'er shall their lustre decay.
The mild glance of the morn we with fondness admire,
But are hurt by the blaze of the day.

When the thick mist of faction would rest on thy height,
Forbear, thou *bright planet* to rise;
Or ascending in anger, oppose thy fierce light,
Till the phantom fades, scatters and dies."

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